(a) whether 'backlog/carried forward vacancies' reserved for SCs/STs and OBCs are required to be treated as a 'separate and distinct group' as provided under Article 16(4) (b) of the Constitution to overcome 50 per cent ceiling limit on vacancies to be reserved in a year; and

(b) if so, the 'backlog/carried forward vacancies' ascertained as per para 5 of the DOPT OM No. 36012/2/96-Estt.(Res), dated 2nd July, 1997 in respect of SCs, STs and OBCs in Group A, B, C and D categories of services as on 29th August, 1997 in his Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) and (b) The requisite information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

India's offer in crisis management

803. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India had offered USA to send 100 doctors and 1,000 litres of blood to New York to help in crisis management;

(b) if so, whether USA does not accept blood from India;

(c) whether some of the Indian families in America had wanted to donate blood after the attack but the US Government did not accept the blood as the people had visited India recently;

(d) if so, the reasons given by the US Government; and

(e) whether India had protested to America on this?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) The Indian Red Cross Society had offered to provide 1000 units of blood among other support to its counter part, American Red Cross during the September 11 crisis in New York.

(b) The American Red Cross, while appreciating such offers from various Red Cross Societies from all over the world declined assistance as they were meeting their own demands.

(c) to (e) These were based on some anecdotal reports appearing in newspapers and have not been confirmed.